referring to. Unless the First Sea Lord and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff have the clear guidance of the War Cabinet on general questions of policy, it is impossible for them to obtain the highest and most efficient power out of the war machine they are directing.

29th April, 1917. J. C. S."

Sir William Robertson sent in to the War Cabinet ^s comment upon the Smuts document:

Robertson's note on the Smuts Memorandum

"OPERATIONS ON WEST FRONT

1. The French Government is apparently unwilling to continue serious offensive operations.

This, if true, means a drastic change in the military situation. Local offensive operations, which the French are said to be contemplating will have no real effect. In war there is no half-way house between fighting a battle through with the determination to beat the enemy, and acting defensively. Such phrases as * active defensive * and ' offensive defensive ' are mere words without any meaning in practice.

Perils of Inaction

2. If the French stop now and once get away from the idea of heavy fighting and heavy losses, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to persuade them to undertake a big offensive again. At the best the stop may mean that they will not begin again till the spring of 1918, as, until the arrival of an

American Army in France, there is no reason to suppose that the Allies will be in a better position to fight on the Western Front than they are now.

3. The advantages which the French may claim for inaction are : Germany may be starved out